

**Board of Behavioral Sciences
Concept Draft for MFT Curriculum
October 2007**

The Board's MFT Education Committee held its first meeting in July 2006, and has been developing, with input from schools, agencies, licensees and the public, revisions to the educational requirements for MFT intern registration and licensure. The Committee will have its final meeting on December 7, 2007. **Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed, and may be sent to Paul Riches, Executive Officer at Paul_Riches@dca.ca.gov or to Ian Russ, Board Chair at Ian.Russ@att.net.**

Staff expects the final proposal to be brought before the full Board at its meeting in February 2008. These revisions, if approved by the Board, are expected to be carried in 2008 legislation. If it passes, the legislation would technically take effect on January 1, 2009. However, in order to give schools enough time to implement the changes, the legislation would contain staggered dates that guide the implementation of the new requirements.

Current MFT educational requirements can be found in Business and Professions Code Sections 4980.37, 4980.38, 4980.39, 4980.40, and 4980.41. Substantive proposed changes to those requirements are highlighted.

§4980.36. DEGREE PROGRAM

- (a) This section applies to applicants for licensure or registration who began graduate study on or after August 1, 2012.
- (b) Applicants for licensure or registration shall possess a doctor's or master's degree conferred by a school, college or university accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education¹ or a program accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education, in one of the following disciplines:
- (1) marriage, family, and child counseling
 - (2) marital and family therapy
 - (3) psychology
 - (4) clinical psychology
 - (5) counseling psychology
 - (6) counseling with an emphasis in marriage, family, and child counseling
 - (7) counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy
- (c) A doctor's or master's degree program that qualifies for licensure or registration shall do all of the following:
- (1) Integrate marriage and family therapy principles throughout its curriculum.
 - (2) Integrate the principles of mental health recovery oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery oriented practice environments throughout its curriculum.
 - (3) Allow for innovation and individuality in the education of marriage and family therapists.
 - (4) Encourage students to develop those personal qualities that are intimately related to effective practice such as integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, and personal presence.
 - (5) Permit an emphasis or specialization that may address any one or more of the unique and complex array of human problems, symptoms, and needs of Californians served by marriage and family therapists.

¹ This will be changed to reflect whatever is the final outcome regarding reform of the BPPVE and recent board actions to sponsor legislation recognizing regional accreditation agencies.

- (6) Integrate the understanding of various cultures and the social and psychological implications of socio-economic position throughout its curriculum.
- (7) Provide students with the opportunity to meet with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment, and recovery.

(d) A doctor's or master's degree program that qualifies for licensure or registration shall contain no less than 60 semester or 90 quarter units of instruction that includes, but is not limited to all of the following.

- (1) Diagnosis, assessment, prognosis and treatment of mental disorders, including severe mental disorders, evidence based practices, and psychological testing.
- (2) At least 12 semester or 18 quarter units in theories, principles, and methods of a variety of psychotherapeutic orientations directly related to marriage and family therapy, and marital and family systems approaches to treatment and how these theories can be applied therapeutically with individuals, couples, families, adults, children, adolescents, and groups to improve, restore, or maintain healthy relationships.
- (3) Developmental issues from infancy to old age. This instruction shall include:
 - (A) The effects of developmental issues on individuals, couples, and family relationships.
 - (B) The psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications of developmental issues and their effects.
 - (C) Aging and its biological, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects.
 - (D) A variety of cultural understandings of human development.
 - (E) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of socioeconomic status.
 - (F) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of a representative variety of the cultures found within California.
- (4) The broad range of matters that may arise within marriage and family relationships and life events within a variety of California cultures including:
 - (A) Child abuse assessment and reporting
 - (B) Spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same gender abuse dynamics
 - (C) Cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members.
 - (D) Childbirth
 - (E) Child rearing, parenting and stepparenting
 - (F) Marriage
 - (G) Divorce
 - (H) Blended families
 - (I) Long term care
 - (J) End of life
 - (K) Grief

Instruction shall include the psychological, psychotherapeutic, community, and health implications of these matters and life events.

- (5) Cultural competency and sensitivity, including a familiarity with the racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of persons living in California.
- (6) Multicultural development and cross-cultural interaction, including experiences of race, ethnicity, class, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender and disability and their

incorporation into psychotherapeutic process.

(7) An understanding of the effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources.

(8) Human sexuality including the study of physiological-psychological and social-cultural variables associated with sexual identity, sexual behavior and sexual disorders.

(9) Substance abuse, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, including behavioral addiction. Instruction shall include all of the following.

(A) The definition of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders and addiction.

(B) Medical aspects of substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.

(C) The effects of psychoactive drug use.

(D) Current theories of the etiology of substance abuse and addiction.

(E) The role of persons and systems that support or compound substance abuse and addiction.

(F) Major approaches to identification, evaluation and treatment of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders and addiction, including best practices.

(G) Legal aspects of substance abuse.

(H) Populations at risk with regard to substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.

(I) Community resources offering screening, assessment, treatment and follow-up for the affected person and family.

(J) Recognition of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders and addiction and appropriate referral.

(K) The prevention of substance use disorders and addiction.

(L) For purposes of this paragraph, "co-occurring disorders" is defined as a mental illness and substance abuse diagnosis occurring simultaneously in an individual.

(10) California law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists. This course shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas of study:

(A) Contemporary professional ethics and statutory, regulatory, and decisional laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice.

(B) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of marriage and family therapy, including family law.

(C) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.

(D) The psychotherapist/patient privilege, confidentiality, the patient dangerous to self or others, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

(E) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values and his or her professional behavior and ethics.

(F) Differences in legal and ethical standards for different types of work settings.

(11) Psychopharmacology.

(12) No less than nine semester or thirteen quarter units of practicum in a supervised clinical placement that provides supervised fieldwork experience including a minimum of 225 hours of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups. The practicum shall provide training in all of the following areas:

(A) applied use of theory and psychotherapeutic techniques

(B) assessment

(C) diagnosis

(D) prognosis

(E) treatment of individuals and premarital, couple, family, and child relationships,

including all of the following:

- (i) dysfunctions
 - (ii) healthy functioning
 - (iii) health promotion
 - (iv) illness prevention
 - (v) working with families
- (F) professional writing including documentation of services, treatment plans, and progress notes
- (G) how to find and use resources

Educational institutions are encouraged to design the practicum required by this paragraph to include marriage and family therapy experience in low-income and multicultural mental health settings.

(e) A degree qualifying for licensure or registration shall include instruction in the following areas:

- (1) Case management
- (2) Systems of care for the severely mentally ill
- (3) Public and private services and supports available for the severely mentally ill
- (4) Community resources for victims of abuse
- (5) Disaster and trauma response
- (6) Advocacy for the severely mentally ill
- (7) Collaborative treatment

The instruction required in this subdivision may be provided either in credit level coursework or through extension programs offered by the degree granting institution.

- (f) The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation or approval.
- (g) Each applicant shall submit to the board a certification from the educational institution stating that the institution's required curriculum for graduation and any associated coursework completed by the applicant satisfies the requirements of this section.
- (h) The changes made to this section are intended to improve the educational qualifications for licensure in order to better prepare future licentiates for practice, and is not intended in any way to expand or restrict the scope of licensure for marriage and family therapists.

The following “sunset” text for the “old” educational requirements is proposed to be added to Sections 4980.37, 4980.38, 4980.39, 4980.40, 4980.41:

This section shall become inoperative effective January 1, 2019.